



Structures for Building Teams

Structures in this Chapter

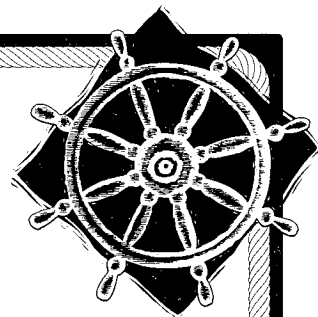
- ★ *Find-the-Fiction*
- ★ *RallyRobin*
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This chapter outlines some of our favorite structures for building teams. They are designed to use in teams of four, but can be easily modified if you have a few teams of three or five in the room. When selecting a team-building structure, consider the overall content of your meeting and the specific purpose of the activity you're creating. Whenever possible connect the content of the teambuilding activity directly to the content of your meeting. Many teambuilding structures such as RoundRobin or Team Statements, can be quickly inserted in any meeting. They can provide a comfortable transition into the meeting, or an energizer or check for understanding in the middle. Others such as Find-the-Fiction require a little more time. A greater emphasis on teambuilding is required at the beginning of the year or when new home teams are formed but, if you plan skillfully, relationship building will be part of every meeting. Remember, as the captain of the ship, teambuilding is an investment in the relationships of your crew. Being accepted as part of a team means that no one has to face the perils of the journey alone.

"We are more alike,
my friend, then we
are unlike."
—Maya Angelou

"The way is long —
let us go together.
The way is
difficult — let us
help each other.
The way is joyful —
let us share it."
—Joyce Hunter

"A good laugh
is sunshine in
a house."
—William
Thackeray



We are in a people business and our success depends on how well we develop a collaborative community — productive and supportive relationships among faculty, students, parents and the community.

What are we doing well to build relationships at our school?

[illegible]



An Odd Squad

On his way out the classroom door, Niels grabbed his article for tomorrow's faculty meeting. It had been sitting on his desk all week inviting him to read it, but the days had gone by in a whirlwind of activity. There was always so much to do and so many students that needed his attention. He would sit down tonight after dinner, read through it, and make notes. That way the ideas would be fresh in his mind for tomorrow's meeting.

Niels looked forward to the discussion. He knew the members of his home team would have contrasting articles to read. Maggie had already alluded to the fact that her article would lead to a lively debate. Then she'd grinned. She always seemed to get things done first and then checked on the rest of them. He attributed it to the enthusiasm of youth.

Niels enjoyed working with them. They made an unusual team. Four different grade levels and very different subject interests. He was close to the end of his career while Maggie was just starting, and Juan and Lynn were somewhere in the middle... two optimists, a pessimist, and a pragmatist. In fact, if they hadn't been assigned to the same home team in meet-

ings, they'd never have taken the time to get to know one another. That would have been a shame.

It had been awkward at first. They didn't know how to work together and they got tangled in one another's humor. All four of them would rather have been on other teams with people who shared their own interests. But then they would have missed the excitement of finding out what they had in common, the diversity of their experiences, and the creative sparks that flew as they approached topics from opposing sides.

Niels had to admit that that they had widened his horizons and provided support for him when he was stressed with coaching and family responsibilities. They always seemed pleased to see him coming down the hall. As the year progressed, they'd grown into a functional team in meetings, and in the process become friends. Niels was now at the point where he missed them a little when the groups were mixed randomly or purposefully in meetings. It always felt comfortable when they came back together... like coming home. It would be hard to say goodbye to the team at the end of the year.



Structures at a Glance



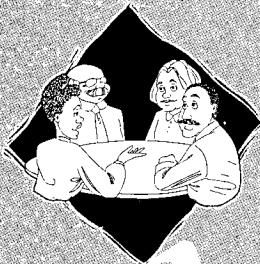
Find-the-Fiction

1. The leader provides a topic.
2. Participants write three statements (2 truths, 1 fiction).
3. Participants read their statements to teammates.
4. Teammates discuss the statements.
5. Teammates guess and celebrate.



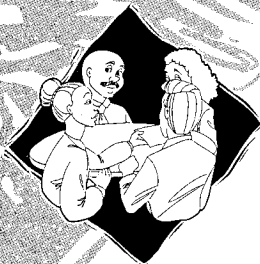
RallyRobin

1. Participants pair.
2. The leader announces a topic.
3. A adds an idea while B listens.
4. B adds an idea while A listens.
5. Repeat.



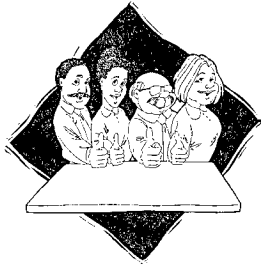
RoundRobin

1. The leader announces the topic.
2. Participants take turns talking.



RoundTable

1. The leader provides a question for discussion.
2. Person 1 writes his/her response and passes the paper to Person 2.
3. Each person records his/her response in turn.
4. RoundRobin discussion of the responses.



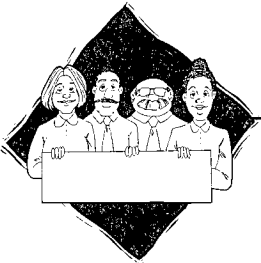
Team Chant or Cheer

1. The leader presents criteria of chant or cheer.
2. Teams create their chant or cheer.
3. Teams present their chant or cheer.



Team Interview

1. The leader announces a topic.
2. Think time is given.
3. Participants interview first teammate.
4. Remaining teammates are interviewed.



Team Statements

1. The leader presents topic.
2. Think time is given and individuals write.
3. Pair and share with partner.
4. Synthesis of ideas with partner.
5. Pairs compare.
6. Synthesis of ideas with team.



Team Window

1. Each team draws a Team Window on a large sheet of paper.
2. The leader provides the team with a topic.
3. Teammate 1 states his/her preference.
4. Teammates indicate agreement.
5. Commonalities are recorded under One of Us, Two of Us, Three of Us, or All of Us.

Structures



Find-the-Fiction

Find-the-Fiction is an amusing way to find out what you know, or think you know, about your team members. Each person writes three statements: two unbelievable facts and one believable fiction about himself/herself. When the participants are ready, the leader calls a number and that team member reads his/her statements. The rest of the team puts their heads together and tries to determine which of the three statements is fictional. The team presents its guess. If the team correctly guesses the fiction, the author applauds them. If the team guesses incorrectly, they applaud the author. The structure continues until all team members have presented their statements. This structure provides a safe environment in which to “brag” about accomplishments or to poke fun at oneself. Find-the-Fiction is always full of surprises and little known facts.

Steps

1. **The leader provides a topic.**
2. **Participants write three statements (2 truths, 1 fiction).**
3. **Participants read their statements to teammates.**
4. **Teammates discuss the statements.**
5. **Teammates guess and celebrate.**



Variations

- Introduce the structure at one meeting and assign the creation of statements as homework. This allows everyone lots of time to come up with unbelievable truths and a believable fiction.
- Post the Find-the-Fiction sheets and have a Gallery Tour to gather everyone's vote on where the fiction lies.
- Rather than deciding on the fiction as a team, each person can hold up 1, 2, or 3 fingers to indicate his/her guess.

Hints

- Model the structure. Be creative. This loosens up the group, gives them license to be creative, and allows you to reveal something about yourself. Keep your statements short so that people realize that they do not need to tell stories.
- The leader may want to structure who is speaking and the length of the discussion so that all groups finish within a similar time frame.
- The person who is presenting may be asked to stand. This allows the leader to quickly see where each team is in the activity.

Principles



Positive Interdependence

Each participant depends on the others to create statements and to work together to make a guess.



Individual Accountability

Each participant must prepare and present his/her three statements.



Equal Participation

Everyone has an opportunity to share his/her statements.



Simultaneous Interaction

Twenty-five percent of the participants are presenting at one time and seventy-five percent are working together to discuss the options and make a choice.

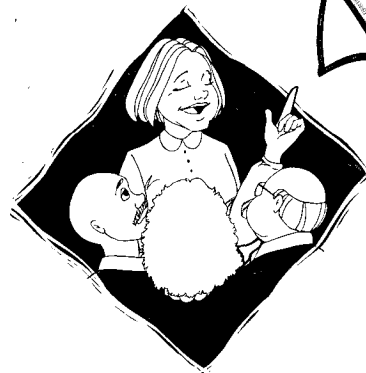
Find-the-Fiction



Idea Starters for

Find-the-Fiction

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- Places that I would like to visit
- Things I would do with a million dollars
- Hobbies I enjoy
- Major accomplishments
- Greatest fears
- Secrets people don't know about me
- The most productive groups I have belonged to
- Funny things I did as a child
- Problems I've solved
- The best presents I've ever received
- The best presents I've ever given
- The reasons I became a teacher
- School myths
- Facts about my family
- Adventures as a student
- Escapades in cyberspace
- Animal tales
- Creative mistakes
- Home renovations
- Memorable trips



Find-the-Fiction

Two of these statements are unbelievable, but true. One of the statements is a believable fiction. Can you find the fiction?

1

2

3



Find-the-Fiction Structure Log

Date _____

What we did _____

How it turned out _____

Charting a course for next time _____

Date _____

What we did _____

How it turned out _____

Charting a course for next time _____



Find-the-Fiction Structure Log

Date _____

What we did _____

How it turned out _____

Charting a course for next time _____

Date _____

What we did _____

How it turned out _____

Charting a course for next time _____



RallyRobin

RallyRobin is a verbal ping pong or table tennis game. Participants pair and label themselves A and B. A adds an idea while B listens; then B adds an idea while A listens. The process repeats itself over and over again within the time allowed. The object is to create as long a list of ideas as possible. Topics for teambuilding using RallyRobin might include foods that should be served in the cafeteria, great instructional strategies, or plans for the holidays.

Steps

1. **Participants pair.**
2. **The leader announces a topic.**
3. **A adds an idea while B listens.**
4. **B adds an idea while A listens.**
5. **Repeat.**



Variations

- RallyRobin can be modified into RallyTable by having participants pass a piece of paper back and forth and record their ideas on it. This slows the activity down, but provides a record and can be used as an alternative to 4S Brainstorming to generate ideas.
- RallyRobin can be used to debrief any professional development topic by having participants take turns identifying what they have learned.
- RallyRobin can be used to inform decision making by listing advantages and disadvantages of an option.

Hints

- Model the importance of giving and listening to each other. Remind participants that this is not a discussion.
- You may wish to have the partners pass an object, such as a pencil, back and forth so that you can visually track the back-and-forth nature of the structure.
- Whenever possible, tie the content of RallyRobin to the purpose of your meeting.

Principles



Positive Interdependence
Participants listen and learn from the positions of others.



Individual Accountability
Each team member must publicly state ideas.



Equal Participation
Each team member adds an idea in turn.



Simultaneous Interaction
Fifty percent of the participants are adding ideas at one time.

RallyRobin

Cooperative Meetings



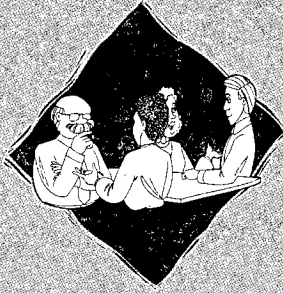
Idea Starters for

RallyRobin

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- Foods that should be served in the cafeteria
- Skills students should have when they leave school
- Good books for the library
- Enrichment activities for summer vacation
- Games that support critical and creative thinking
- Playground games
- Indoor recess activities
- Things we're doing well
- Activities that spark creativity
- Educational videos
- Useful assessment strategies
- Great instructional strategies
- Enjoyable fieldtrips
- Interesting guest speakers
- Faculty social events
- Snacks for meetings
- Fundraising ideas
- Topics for assemblies
- Themes for prom
- Holiday plans



RallyRobin Structure Log

Date _____

What we did _____

How it turned out _____

Charting a course for next time _____

Date _____

What we did _____

How it turned out _____

Charting a course for next time _____



RoundRobin

RoundRobin is a simple structure used to equalize participation and sharing in a team. It can be used in teambuilding to provide opportunities for participants to share information about themselves. This information could be silly, such as describing what they would do if they were a circus performer, or more serious, such as describing the highlight of their teaching career. The leader announces the topic and indicates which team member will begin to speak. The rest of the team listens attentively while their teammate speaks for the allotted amount of time. The leader then asks the next person to speak. This continues until all four team members have shared. RoundRobin prevents individuals from dominating group discussion.

Steps

- 1. The leader announces the topic.**
- 2. Participants take turns talking.**



Variations

- Use different methods to determine who speaks first. (For example, the person who woke up the earliest, the person who lives farthest away, etc.)
- Increase accountability by randomly selecting someone to paraphrase the ideas contributed by their teammates.
- Continue the RoundRobin for several rounds so that participants can make meaningful contributions and responses to the ideas of others.
- RoundRobin can be used to debrief or share what team members have learned from another partner in Mix-Pair-Share, All Around the Clock, or Stand Up-Hand Up-Pair Up.
- RoundRobin can be used in collaborative decision making to provide opportunities for everyone to state a position, summarize his/her understanding, express concerns, or reflect on the process.

Hints

- Until everyone is familiar with RoundRobin, it's important to model the behavior of the speakers and the listeners.
- Provide the "Right to Pass" until the end if an individual is not ready to speak as his/her turn arises.
- An overhead clock may be used to provide each speaker with the same amount of time or an individual may play the role of timekeeper.
- The facilitator may wish to provide a sentence starter such as, "After having read the article, I feel strongly about...."
"If this were my decision to make, I would suggest that we...."

Principles



Positive Interdependence

To complete the structure, the team must allow each member to speak.



Individual Accountability

Each person is accountable for sharing his/her ideas. Accountability for listening can be increased by asking group members to be ready to paraphrase the ideas of their peers.



Equal Participation

Each team member has an equal amount of time to speak.



Simultaneous Interaction

In RoundRobin, twenty-five percent of the participants are speaking at one time.

RoundRobin

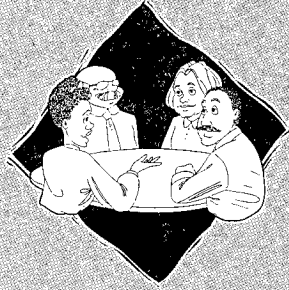


Idea Starters for

RoundRobin



- If I worked as a circus performer, I would be...
- If I were at an amusement park, I would ride the...
- If I were hosting a dinner party, I would invite...
- If I were not a teacher, I would be...
- If I could teach my favorite courses, I would teach...
- If I could be a student with anyone in history, I would choose _____ as a teacher.
- If I had 10 minutes on national TV, I would talk about...
- If I could greatly improve a skill, it would be....
- If I wrote a book, it would be about ...
- If I could go to any conference, I would attend...
- If I were in charge of this decision, I would...
- If I could purchase anything for the school, I would buy...
- If I were a superhero, I would save the world from...
- If I could pick a highlight from my career, it would be...
- If I could travel anywhere, I would visit...
- If I could witness a historical event, it would be...
- If I had a super power, I would like to be able to...
- If I could invent anything, it would be...



RoundRobin Structure Log

Date _____

What we did _____

How it turned out _____

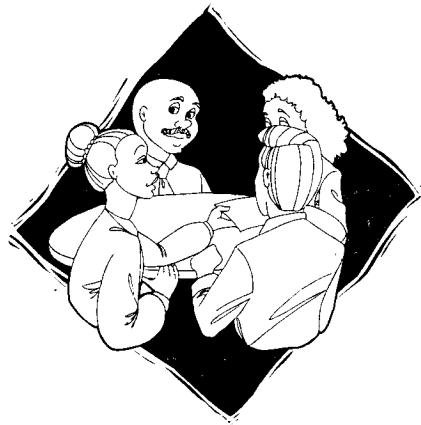
Charting a course for next time _____

Date _____

What we did _____

How it turned out _____

Charting a course for next time _____



RoundTable

RoundTable requires a written response from each team member. It's a useful structure in building and maintaining home teams because it ensures that team members talk and write about their ideas. The written responses can be kept in a team folder or portfolio, allowing the team to chart its progress over time. The leader begins the activity by providing a question orally or in print, along with a recording sheet that has a space for each team member to write on. A team member is selected at random. He/she records his/her response and passes the paper on to the next person. When everyone has recorded a response, team members engage in a RoundRobin discussion of the ideas.

Steps

- 1. The leader provides a question for discussion.**
- 2. Person 1 writes his/her response and passes the paper to Person 2.**
- 3. Each person records his/her response in turn.**
- 4. RoundRobin discussion of the responses.**



Variations

- The recording sheet may circle the table more than once to allow people to respond to their teammates' responses or to create a list of ideas.
- Use a timer to equalize the amount of time each person has to write a response.

Hints

- Provide a recording sheet.
- Keep team responses in a team folder or portfolio.
- Connect the content of the RoundTable to the purpose of the meeting as an anticipatory set, an application, or to provide closure.
- Choose questions that require short answers so as not to create stress for the individual who is writing. RoundTable is another structure that can be used to create lists of ideas.

Principles



Positive Interdependence

Participants must share the recording sheet. Everyone must contribute a written response in order to complete the activity.



Individual Accountability

Each team member must record his/her ideas. There is a written record.



Equal Participation

Each team member adds his/her response in turn.



Simultaneous Interaction

Twenty-five percent of the participants are writing at one time.

RoundTable



Idea Starters for

RoundTable



- What snack foods would you like to have at meetings?
- What review strategies do your students find the most rewarding?
- What extracurricular activities did you participate in as a student?
- How can we improve our instructional skills?
- What do you like the most about being a teacher?
- What frustrates you the most about being a teacher?
- What topics would you add to our professional development list?
- What problems are worth solving at our school?
- How can we celebrate individual achievements?
- What other ways are there to say, "Good for You"?
- How can we make visitors feel welcome in our school?
- How can we celebrate our diversity?
- How can we support one another through change?
- What issues should we discuss as a faculty?
- How can we enfranchise marginalized groups of students?
- How can we help our students spot bias in the media?
- How can we use district level staff and resources to support our goals?